

## II. Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims replaces without prejudice all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

### Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) ~~An open architecture method and~~ A middleware platform system for implementing a Universal Messaging Gateway comprising:

at least one external short message entity (ESME);

at least one short message service center (SMSC);

a universal message gateway including a first common interface for connecting to said at least one ESME and a second common interface for connecting to said at least one SMSC; said universal message gateway further including a home location register module and a mobile switching center module;

said home location register module and said mobile switching center module being configured to receive short message service traffic from said at least one SMSC;

and

said universal message gateway being configured to direct said short message service traffic to a virtual mobile station address associated with said at least one ESME.

2. (Currently Amended) ~~The system of claim 1, which relates to art directed at delivering network originated telecommunications messaging traffic to a large number of related receiving telecommunications network equipment which may otherwise be~~

comprising a plurality of SMSCs wherein at least two of said SMSCs are disparate in design, and even function.

3. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 2, ~~which relates to both~~ wherein at least one of said SMSCs sends domestic and foreign network originated telecommunications messaging traffic to said universal message gateway and another one of said SMSCs sends foreign network originated telecommunications messaging traffic to said universal message gateway.

4. (Currently Amended) ~~The system of claim 3~~ gateway of claim 11, where telecommunications messaging traffic includes at least one of Multi-Media traffic, interactive and/or synchronous mobile text, and ~~related telecommunications messaging or information services~~ short message service traffic.

5. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 1, which is implemented as part of a~~ A computer program product stored on a computer readable media when executed by a computer, said computer program comprising:

a) a computer readable memory medium; and b) a computer program instructions for a universal message gateway having a first common interface for connecting to at least one external short message entity (ESME), a second common interface for connecting to at least one short message service center (SMSC), and a home location register module and a mobile switching center module configured to receive telecommunications messaging traffic from said at least one SMSC,

wherein the instructions configure said universal message gateway to direct said telecommunications messaging traffic to a virtual mobile station address associated with said at least one ESME.

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 6~~ system of claim 1, where said first common interface includes articulated elements ('receiver managers') which interact with external short message entities (ESMEs), Short Message Service Centers (SMSCs) and other such telecommunication network elements a first receiver manager which interacts with said ESME, and said second common interface includes a second receiver manager which interacts with said SMSCs.

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 7~~ system of claim 1, which relates to ~~connection management functionality and the throttling of incoming protocols and like logical instructions to prevent excessive utilization of network elements by external entities~~ wherein said common interfaces are configured to implement a throttling parameter defining a number of short message service messages that are permitted to be received from one of said SMSCs or directed to said ESME within a configurable time frame by said universal message gateway.

10. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 7~~ system of claim 1, which relates to a wherein said universal message gateway is configured to implement a security and network management algorithm which blocks incoming traffic based upon the service centre from which it for blocking incoming said traffic based upon the SMSC from which said traffic was relayed or originated.

11. (New) A universal message gateway comprising:

- a first common interface for connecting to at least one external short message entity (ESME);

- a second common interface for connecting to at least one short message service center (SMSC);

- a home location register module and a mobile switching center module configured to receive telecommunications messaging traffic from said at least one SMSC; and

- a routing engine connected to said first common interface, said second common interface, said home location register module and said mobile switching center module;

- wherein said routing engine is configured to direct said telecommunications messaging traffic to a virtual mobile station address associated with said at least one ESME.

12. (New) The universal message gateway of claim 11, wherein said at least one ESME is associated with an application service provider (ASP).

13. (New) The universal message gateway of claim 11 wherein said telecommunications messaging traffic is routed to said at least one ESME within at least one of parameter selected from the group consisting of SMSC Connection ID, Termination TON/NPI/MSISDN, Origination TON/NPI/MSISDN, protocol ID, data coding scheme, and SMSC address.

14. (New) The universal message gateway of claim 11 wherein said first common interface is based on the short message peer to peer (SMPP) protocol.

15. (New) The universal message gateway of claim 11 wherein said routing engine is further configured to perform at least one of a throttling function, a queuing function, and a buffering function.

16. (New) The universal message gateway of claim 11 further comprising an SMS reply server configured to generate a response message to confirm a successful delivery of a message to said at least one ESME.